



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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**KANSAS MAN SENTENCED TO THIRTEEN YEARS IN PRISON
ON FEDERAL FIREARM AND METHAMPHETAMINE CHARGES**

OCALA, FLORIDA - Senior United States District Judge William Terrell Hodges on Thursday sentenced DANIEL WAYNE CONNELL, a 33 year-old resident of Salina, Kansas, to 13 years in federal prison on charges of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, possession of a firearm by a prohibited person (convicted felon), and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense. In addition to the prison term, CONNELL must serve four years in a supervised release program and pay a \$400 special assessment to the United States. CONNELL previously had entered a guilty plea to the charges on November 3, 2005.

According to the plea agreement, Marion County deputies stopped CONNELL and his co-defendant, Scott Lambert Leister, on January 10, 2005 as the two men were driving in Marion County, Florida. When a police canine alerted on the vehicle, both men unsuccessfully attempted to flee and were arrested. A search of their truck revealed four

loaded firearms, assorted drug paraphernalia and 294.9 grams of methamphetamine. Agents later determined that CONNELL had traveled from Kansas to Florida with the intention of establishing a methamphetamine distribution operation in Marion County.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the City of Ocala Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Office, the Dickinson County (KS) Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from ATF. United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr.